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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 6 February 1995, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. MEGHLAOUI (Algeria)
(Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of Mr. Hitam (Malaysia), Mr. Meghlaoui, Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE THIRD DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (agenda item 16) (continued) (E.CN.4/1995/77, 78 and Add.1 and 105; E/CN.4/1994/66; E/1994/97; A/49/677)

1. Mr. HENRY (United States of America) said that his country had a long and complex history of race relations. There was, perhaps no other nation that had so openly and painfully debated its racial and ethnic heritage or made such strides in building a legal framework in support of racial and ethnic equality. The civil rights movement, born in the 1950s and 1960s, had won the support of millions of Americans, whose devotion to the cause had ultimately led to a more just and inclusive interpretation of the Constitution.

2. No other country had enacted such a comprehensive set of legal guarantees, forbidding racial and ethnic discrimination in voting rights, housing, employment and access to public facilities. If such a fair and just legal system, grounded in universal principles, could hold together a nation as diverse as the United States, so international human rights standards could provide a solid core for a world spinning in many directions simultaneously. The revolution in global communications had to be combined with a revolution in human values if technology were to advance humanity rather than destroy it.

3. Unfortunately, 50 years after the birth of the United Nations, totalitarian Governments in many parts of the world still viewed civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights as mere slogans to be bandied about at will. However, the end of the cold war offered the international community an opportunity to join forces to achieve the goals set half a century earlier. Eradication of racial discrimination and stemming the tide of ethnic conflict and fragmentation was one of the major challenges to be addressed.

4. His delegation was very pleased that the United Nations had expanded its definition of racial discrimination the previous year to include anti-Semitism and anti-Arab behaviour. By clearly condemning such forms of racial and ethnic intolerance, it had taken an important step towards eliminating any sort of international legitimacy that could be associated with such backward views.

5. His delegation noted with sadness, however, the widespread persistence of prejudice and xenophobia and therefore supported the decision to establish a Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. It also supported the expansion of activities such as training in the drafting of national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination and urged the Secretariat to continue taking advantage of the expertise available in the Centre for Human Rights in planning future activities for the Decade.

6. In 1994, the United States had ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and his delegation planned to become an active participant in the deliberations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In July 1994, the United States had submitted a comprehensive initial report to the Human Rights Committee under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Later in the year, it had welcomed a visit by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, who had met a broad range of private citizens and government officials.

7. His delegation had just received the Special Rapporteur's report and anticipated a full and lively dialogue with him on its contents, with which it agreed in some instances and disagreed in others. Above all, it looked forward to discussing his recommendations, as part of its country's continuing effort to eliminate racism entirely, although some of them posed fundamental difficulties with regard to freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of the press, which were basic elements of the United States Constitution and of internationally recognized human rights. As racism was a worldwide phenomenon, it was to be hoped that other Governments would extend similar invitations to the Special Rapporteur.

8. Mr. GLELE-AHANHANZO (Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance) said that he welcomed the more specific definition of his mandate in Commission resolution 1994/64, which referred to discrimination against Blacks, Arabs and Muslims, xenophobia, negrophobia and anti-Semitism. During 1994, he had done his best to use the meagre resources at his disposal to carry out that mandate and to comply with the request for regular and systematic reporting on human rights violations affecting women and migrant workers. He wished to point out, however, that his working conditions and those of the Secretariat were far from satisfactory. Unless matters improved, the execution of his mandate could not be guaranteed.

9. Three documents had been prepared by him at the Commission's request: an interim report to the General Assembly (A/49/677); a comprehensive report supplementing the information provided in the latter document (E/CN.4/1995/78); and a mission report on his visit to the United States of America (E/CN.4/1995/78/Add.1).

10. In the interim report, he had specified his methods of work and the scope of his investigations of the areas covered by his mandate. It had emerged from the information supplied by Governments and non-governmental organizations that, contrary to the affirmations of certain analysts, racism as a pseudo-scientific doctrine of the natural or biological inequality of races was far from extinct and persisted side by side with cultural racism. Recent flagrant manifestations of racism and racial discrimination had occurred in, for example, Rwanda, Zaire and the former Yugoslavia, and the problems of migrant workers in Gabon had shown that such phenomena were not confined to the developed world but occurred also in certain developing countries, especially those in the middle-income category.

11. The second report contained the Special Rapporteur's programme of missions for 1995. The Governments of the United Kingdom, Brazil, Germany and France had already agreed in principle to receive him. The report also gave an account of the instances of racism and racial discrimination brought to the Special Rapporteur's attention. He hoped that the countries concerned would not view his presentation of those facts as accusations but rather as evidence of the persistence of such phenomena, even in societies that had taken action to contain them. He added that, given the scale of his mandate, he had left the task of addressing the problem of discrimination against Muslims to the Special Rapporteur on the question of religious intolerance.

12. The third report dealt with his mission to the United States from 9 to 22 October 1994. He had been received there with great openness by both public authorities at the federal and state levels and by non-governmental organizations, which had furnished a wealth of documentation. Although his assessment of the situation did not always coincide with that of the authorities, he commended the persistent efforts of the United States Government to eliminate all vestiges of racism and racial discrimination.

13. He had recommended explicit acknowledgement of the fact that 30 years of intense struggle in that area had not yet fully offset the consequences of 300 years of slavery and racial segregation, particularly in the case of African Americans and native Americans. He had further recommended that affirmative action programmes should be revitalized in order to remedy economic and social disparities and that measures should be taken to prohibit the establishment of racist organizations and to ban racist propaganda.

14. The existence of an indissoluble link between civil and political rights and the economic, social and cultural rights that were their natural corollary had to be accepted. He therefore urged the United States Government to ratify all the international human rights conventions as a means of strengthening its foreign policy on behalf of peace and democracy and giving it greater credibility.

15. Mr. ROGOV (Russian Federation) recalled that 1935 had seen the promulgation of the Nuremberg decrees, which had marked a victory for a racist ideology. Sixty years later, European people were still being refused their citizenship and rights on the grounds of their ethnic origins. Despite the gas chambers of Auschwitz, humankind had still found no antidote to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. They were fatal viruses which could flare up at any time and posed no less of a threat to peace than nuclear war had in the past. For that reason, his Government stood foursquare behind the aim expressed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action that the speedy and comprehensive elimination of all forms of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance was a priority task for the international community.

16. The Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination provided the framework in which that aim could be achieved. Most importantly, a united front should be set up against all such ills, coordinating national, regional and international action taken to that end.

Thus a State should not only legislate against racism within its borders but should affirm international criminal responsibility for racist acts, such as genocide and ethnic cleansing. The international tribunals established to try crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda were most significant in that regard.

17. One of the best ways to counter racism and racial discrimination was to protect the human rights of national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. The Commission should recommend that a comprehensive programme to that end be drawn up. The High Commissioner for Human Rights had an important role to play, and it was gratifying that he was already giving priority to the problem, as was clear from his energetic efforts in Rwanda.

18. The disease of xenophobia and intolerance had regrettably not spared his own country. However, Russian society no longer concealed its problems from itself or others but strove to overcome them. The Russian High Commissioner for Human Rights was tackling the problem and the Minister for Foreign Affairs had met representatives of Russian and foreign human rights organizations. At the international level, too, the struggle must continue. There should be no turning aside. The Soviet poet Aleksandr Galich had written: "Today and every day our train departs for Auschwitz". That would remain the case until racism, xenophobia, intolerance and anti-Semitism no longer existed.

19. Mr. PANG Sen (China), after welcoming South Africa's progress on the road to democracy and racial equality, said that racism had a long history: colonialists had massacred, enslaved and oppressed the people in their colonies, while racial supremacy had been one of the theoretical bases of nazism. Racism therefore concerned not only human rights but also international peace and security.

20. Racism could not, however, be espoused openly; such advocacy would only draw world condemnation. That did not mean that racism had disappeared. It had simply taken on new forms. One such was a derivative of the theory of racial supremacy: a self-righteous imposition of itself by one country on others. The peoples of the world in more than 180 countries, differed greatly in every way, including their approach to human rights. Yet some countries, while talking glibly about pluralism, constantly adopted a posture of superiority. They forced others to adopt their forms of democracy, they wanted others to follow their way of economic development and, on the question of human rights, they imposed their own standards on others. Such racism, appearing under the banner of human rights, was more refined and therefore more deceptive than the colonialists' version: racism was turned into an embodiment of justice, hegemonists became saviours and interventionists became human rights defenders, while victimized countries were seen as human rights violators.

21. Those condemned within the Commission were almost without exception developing countries, whereas their accusers generally were not. He questioned whether the human rights situation in developing countries was so terrible that it had to be condemned year after year, while that in the other group of countries was ideal. He noted that, in a certain Western country,

the average salary for black people was only 56 per cent of that for white people; the average life expectancy of black people was 10 years shorter than that of white people; and, in the universities, black students accounted for only 3.5 per cent of the total. Similarly, there had been an increase in xenophobia in many European countries.

22. The reason that dedicated human rights defenders did not draft resolutions on the situation in their own countries - thus showing their impartiality - was that they were the self-appointed judges and deemed themselves superior. If such phenomena were to be eliminated, it was imperative to ensure that all members of the international community were truly equal. No country or group of countries should be allowed to direct other countries how to run their internal affairs. Only with mutual respect, together with cooperation and dialogue on all issues, including the promotion and protection of human rights, would it be possible to make steady progress in the work of the Commission. If the cold-war practice of confrontation continued, it would only further deepen mistrust and do nothing but harm to the work of the Commission.

23. Mr. SALGADO (Brazil) said his delegation welcomed the dismantling of apartheid and the advent of a democratic South Africa, which the international community should support in its task of promoting social justice and consolidating peace. Elsewhere, however, concern had grown at the manifestations of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in many parts of the world. The most dramatic aspect of such manifestations was the physical aggression against individuals or groups of different race or skin colour, but perhaps the most serious cause for concern was the widespread xenophobia - particularly in the developed world - directed against such vulnerable groups as migrant workers and asylum-seekers.

24. Xenophobia was a cultural attitude linked with the irrational and darker side of the human soul. Often associated with the search for a national identity in a decharacterized world, it was difficult to curb because of its wide dissemination and its many subtle forms of expression. A new wave of anti-Semitism - but also the distribution of tracts attacking Arabs or Black people - was a matter for serious apprehension. In that context, he noted a dangerous trend in recent attempts to endow racist theories with a scientific foundation. Moreover, laws to restrict immigration both reflected and encouraged attitudes of racial intolerance.

25. At the same time many peoples and Governments were increasingly counteracting racist manifestations. Advances had been made in the legal, administrative and educational fields. Still more had to be done, however. Those responsible for acts of racial violence or the propagation of racist theories must be severely punished. His delegation agreed with the Special Rapporteur - whose report he praised - that democratic values such as the freedom of expression should not be perverted to serve the cause of racism. However, the suggestion therein that regional and continental economic

integration encouraged xenophobic attitudes was not, in his delegation's view, well-grounded. The Commission should seriously consider the suggestion that an international conference on racism should be convened.

26. As a multiracial society with a very mixed population, Brazil had always abhorred doctrines of racial superiority. Its Constitution and legislation expressly forbade racism. The country was not immune to racist attitudes, however, and the new Government envisaged the adoption of important measures in the social field, enabling vast segments of the population - hitherto marginalized - to participate in all areas of national life. Brazil was ready to engage in a dialogue with the Commission on the matter and to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur in the fulfilment of his mandate.

27. Mr. Joon-Hee LEE (Republic of Korea), having welcomed the dramatic transformation of South Africa into a unified, democratic and non-racial republic, said that racism was not, however, limited to southern Africa; millions of people throughout the world were still victims of racist acts and he called on all those present to work together in enforcing international humanitarian rules regarding racial discrimination. Discrimination based on racial or cultural criteria led to hatred, conflict and violence which, in their turn, could threaten peace and security, as was demonstrated by the recent tragedies in the former Yugoslavia, in Rwanda and elsewhere. His country supported efforts to fight racism; its commitment was shown by its accession in 1979 to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

28. While welcoming the approach of the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, his Government was concerned that the primary goals of the first two Decades had not yet been achieved. Old forms of racism and discrimination still existed and new forms continued to rear their ugly heads. His delegation commended the devotion of the Special Rapporteur and supported his conclusions, especially those concerning the importance of education. A high priority should be given to fund-raising for educational programmes to promote respect and tolerance.

29. Mr. MUÑOZ-LEDO (Mexico) said that, given current international developments, the reports of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (E/CN.4/1995/78 and Add.1 and A/49/677) were particularly opportune. While the debate on racism and racial discrimination had traditionally been concerned with the process of decolonization and the former system of apartheid in South Africa, it had recently gained new currency with the reappearance of various manifestations of racist and xenophobic violence in both developing and developed countries. Indeed, the resurgence of nationalism in its worst forms and of ethnic conflicts among communities that had previously lived together in peace constituted a new source of international instability.

30. In extreme cases, racism and xenophobia were the result of deliberate policies which institutionalized discriminatory practices, including ethnic cleansing. Those practices were also used by political parties, groups and individuals to promote intolerance and conflict.

31. His Government was particularly concerned about the situation of millions of migrant workers who were increasingly victims of racist and xenophobic practices in their host countries. In that connection, the report of the Special Rapporteur on his mission to the United States of America from 9-22 October 1994 (E/CN.4/1995/78/Add.1) referred to the overall climate of hostility towards immigrants prevailing in the State of California which lay at the root of a number of acts of violence by police officers against migrant workers (para. 81). The adoption of Proposition 187 by the Californian State Legislature on 8 November 1994 contained discriminatory and anti-constitutional provisions in terms of access by the children of illegal migrant workers to education, to health care and to welfare services.

32. While his delegation acknowledged the efforts of the Special Rapporteur to draw the Commission's attention to the situation of the human rights of Mexican migrants in the United States, it felt that, given the gravity of Proposition 187 and the precedent which it set, the Special Rapporteur should have offered a more thorough analysis of the consequences of the adoption of such legislation by the State of California for the enjoyment of human rights by immigrants of Hispanic origin in that State. His Government had expressed its disapproval of Proposition 187, although it recognized that the law did not represent the will of all United States citizens and did not reflect the position of the Federal Government.

33. The international community should live up to the commitments it had formally assumed at the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights to guarantee the protection of the human rights of migrant workers, irrespective of their legal status, by adopting concrete policies which provided penalties for racist and xenophobic acts and promoted the dignity and rights of the persons concerned.

34. Mr. AKTAN (Observer for Turkey) said it was unfortunate that the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (E/CN.4/1995/78 and Add.1) had only just been made available to the Commission, giving members very little time to consider the information it contained. The Special Rapporteur had previously recommended that an interdisciplinary seminar should be organized on the theoretical aspects of contemporary forms of racism. Such a seminar had been held at Istanbul in January 1995, but neither the Special Rapporteur nor representatives from the Centre for Human Rights had attended, although they had been invited.

35. Racism appeared to have permeated almost all segments of some societies. Racists had their own political parties and media, with an array of experts and historians to support their views. Racist attitudes were widespread and acts of discrimination were a daily occurrence, to which people barely paid attention. Governments had so far been unable to achieve substantial results in combating racism. The main problem was that they were chiefly interested in cosmetic changes rather than in taking the patient steps necessary to achieve real progress.

36. Racism, as currently practised, was sometimes cloaked in the guise of cultural relativism. It was also erroneously grouped together with ethno-nationalism and religious fundamentalism. It was true that all three were exclusionary movements which directed feelings of hatred towards a target group and encouraged attacks on members of that group. However, unlike the other two movements, racism did not arise from a conflict between opposing parties; it was based on irrational rather than material reasons. Nor did racism arise from demographic changes and economic crises: those might be aggravating factors but were not root causes.

37. It was difficult to understand why the human rights system had turned a blind eye to the suffering of the innocent victims of racism. Apparently, their very innocence made them less worthy of consideration and less threatening. Innocent victims did not rise up in armed rebellion. Thus, the human rights system was closely monitoring the alleged violations of the human rights of terrorist suspects while it virtually condoned the murder of civilians by ethnic terrorists.

38. By classifying human beings into a hierarchy, racism was incompatible with the very concept of humanity. A racist individual was not in a position to promote the human rights of those whom he had designated as being on the lower end of the scale. Moreover, the first priority of a racist was not to promote the human rights of others but to prove that he was not a racist. Criticizing the human rights records of others led to ranking countries in a hierarchy and blaming those at the lower end of the scale for oppressing their own ethnic groups, which only paved the way for racist attacks against their own citizens abroad.

39. Unless racism was dealt with appropriately, racist attacks and ethnic violence would continue. Racism was a test case for the United Nations system. His Government would review its cooperation with that system on the basis of its response to that challenge.

40. Mrs. MARKIDES (Observer for Cyprus) said that racism had existed throughout human history and, despite the efforts made to combat it, the international community was currently experiencing a revival of racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance which led to acts of violence, gross violations of human rights and assaults on human dignity. The principal victims were members of national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, as well as other disadvantaged groups such as women and indigenous peoples. The Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination provided an opportunity for the international community to work towards the speedy and comprehensive elimination of those phenomena.

41. Cyprus had joined other European nations in the fight against racial discrimination. It was a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and had recognized the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to receive and consider communications from individuals or groups of individuals claiming to be victims of a violation of any of the rights set forth in the Convention. Her Government had also initiated the procedures for acceptance of the amendment to article 8 of the Convention.

42. The people of Cyprus were themselves victims of the abhorrent policy of racial discrimination since Turkey, which had invaded Cyprus in 1974 and still occupied 37 per cent of its territory, engaged in the practices of ethnic cleansing, racial segregation and racial discrimination. The forcible uprooting of the indigenous Greek Cypriots from the occupied areas, the refusal to allow them to return, the transfer of Turkish settlers to those areas and the destruction of the cultural heritage of the Greek Cypriots were all aimed at creating a homogeneous Turkish-populated area.

43. In that connection, it would be recalled that the European Commission of Human Rights had found Turkey responsible for organized and serious violations of the human rights of Greek Cypriots and for practising racial discrimination by actions directed exclusively against the Greek Cypriot community. For its part, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, after considering the seventh periodic report of Cyprus, had reiterated its expectation and hope that the Government of Cyprus would, without delay, be enabled to exercise its full responsibility for the implementation of all its obligations under the Convention throughout its national territory and that the unacceptable state of affairs in Cyprus, due to the foreign occupation of part of its territory, would finally be brought to an end.

44. Cyprus would continue the struggle against racism in order to contribute to the consolidation of peaceful coexistence and cooperation among peoples in conditions of democracy, tolerance and respect for human rights.

45. Mr. SKODA (Observer for the Czech Republic) said that, despite the valiant efforts of the international community, violations of human rights in a racist context still persisted, directed mainly against national and ethnic minorities.

46. His own Government was taking a number of steps to implement the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. Its Council for Nationalities, a governmental advisory and policy-initiating organ, was responsible for dealing with the entire spectrum of national and ethnic minorities in the Czech Republic, each of which was represented thereon. The Government had taken no specific steps to establish especially favourable conditions for any particular minority group in the public sector since it preferred to base its policy on the general principle of civil rights and non-discrimination, on the assumption that respect for that principle would ensure equality for all population groups. The sole exception was the system of State schools for national minorities, which provided pupils with education in their own languages.

47. His Government had, nevertheless, adopted a resolution in February 1993 in which it pledged itself to respond to any manifestations of racial intolerance which might be viewed as a threat to a particular minority group and to take effective action with regard to programmes advocating organized violence. According to 1994 opinion polls, 74 per cent of the adult population in the Czech Republic had a negative attitude towards the Roma, a minority group. The youth movement known as the "skinheads", of which there were approximately 3,000 members in the country, was the most aggressive in that respect.

48. However, while a repressive approach to racism might have an immediate effect on individuals, it was only through long-term educational measures that attitudes could be changed. To that end, his Government planned to introduce into the school curricula courses promoting tolerance.

49. Mr. LITTMAN (Indian Institute for Non-Aligned Studies) said that, while he welcomed Commission resolution 1994/64 on measures to combat contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, he regretted that it had failed to refer specifically to certain Asiatic groups, while it had mentioned other groups more than once.

50. An important aspect of human rights was the situation in which an institutionalized policy of discrimination was applied to certain groups in a particular society. One example was the plight of the Hindu community in Bangladesh, vividly portrayed by Taslima Nasrin in a novel, for which she had been sentenced to death by Islamic extremists. Other examples of institutionalized discrimination concerned the Rohinga Muslims of Myanmar; the Ahmadis, a self-proclaimed Muslim group in Pakistan; and the Baha'is, a self-proclaimed non-Muslim group in Iran. Those cases certainly fell within the scope of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism and merited his close attention.

51. A form of "religious apartheid" between Muslims and non-Muslims was on the rise in Muslim countries, supported by incendiary articles in the press. A particularly striking example was a letter on fundamentalism published in December 1993 in The Frontier Post, a liberal English-language newspaper, in Pakistan. That letter constituted a clear case of incitation to ideological hatred. At the previous session of the Commission, he had asked the representative of Pakistan to assure the Commission that the views expressed in that letter did not accurately represent Islamic law (Shariah) and would never be endorsed by the Government of Pakistan. He had so far received no reply, nor had there been any response to his query with regard to the 1986 Pakistani law on blasphemy, amended in July 1992 to make the death penalty mandatory for blasphemy against the Prophet Mohammed. That law continued to be strongly opposed by the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mrs. Bhutto, but she had been unable to have it repealed.

52. Of the seven Pakistani Christians falsely accused of blasphemy the previous year, some had been released, some had been killed after release and other cases were still pending. The law on blasphemy was also applicable to Muslims and over 200 cases had been registered between 1991 and 1993 in the Punjab alone. Many Muslims had been killed simply because they failed to adhere to orthodox Sunni beliefs.

53. Although the Pakistan People's Party had pledged to support the non-Muslim minorities of Pakistan, Islamists had recently been pressuring the Government to extend the scope of the Shariah to other districts in that country. Under the 1984 Law of Evidence, the witness of a Christian man was worth half of that of a Muslim man; the testimony of a Christian woman was given even less weight.

54. His organization was also concerned at similar situations in Iran and the Sudan, where persons accused of blasphemy and apostasy were in constant danger of being imprisoned, flogged or killed. It hoped that the Sudanese Government would modify its attitude towards the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, who had been banned from entering that country as a result of his criticisms of traditional Shariah punishments.

55. Since the 1950s, the word "anti-Semitism" had been systematically omitted from the international community's condemnations of racism, racial intolerance and xenophobia. There was no doubt that virtually all the current Islamist movements were expounding an anti-Semitic doctrine. The Swedish Islamic Association had attempted to prove there was a Jewish world conspiracy and that the Holocaust was a Jewish hoax. Sweden, with its strong democratic traditions, would certainly be able to resolve the problems connected with that situation, but it should not be necessary for the minority group concerned to initiate action; the challenge of anti-Semitism should be taken up by all citizens, but first and foremost by the academic and religious communities.

56. Mr. CLAY (International Association against Torture) said that racism was a worldwide phenomenon the function of which was to maintain ownership and control of society in the hands of a tiny, privileged elite. It was not an aberration confined to any single country and the removal of the question of South Africa from the Commission's agenda did not indicate a victory over the corpse of racism. However, by appointing the Special Rapporteur on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and noting the increased incidences of racism in the developed world, the Commission had demonstrated a new determination to end the double standard that had long bedevilled the United Nations in its combat against racism.

57. His own organization had offered to assist the Special Rapporteur during his October 1994 mission to the United States of America. In that connection, it had sponsored a day-long meeting at the Abyssian Baptist Church in New York during which testimony had been given concerning racism in the United States. It had also helped the Special Rapporteur to contact groups and individuals around the country who were addressing racism as a human rights issue.

58. He considered that the Special Rapporteur's report on his mission (E/CN.4/1995/78/Add.1) gave an accurate picture of the situation in the United States. Having quoted numerous extracts from the report in that connection, he went on to say that in the United States, Blacks and Whites lived as separate nations, the former being a de facto colony of the latter. The poverty rate for black children was 54 per cent in 1992, as compared to 44 per cent for Hispanic children and 16 per cent for white children, while Blacks and Hispanics together represented over 50 per cent of the prison population. Those statistics were the products of a racist ideology, the goal of which was to preserve an unjust status quo. They should be viewed in the context of the current political and economic retrenchment in the United States; the recent elections there had heralded the dawn of an era of overt racism and a dramatic shift to the political right.

59. Given that situation, the Commission must not fail to pursue the objectives of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade. If the United States was allowed to continue its racist practices uncriticized, the Commission would never have the credibility to demand that other developed countries, which had thus far escaped scrutiny, should change their own ways. The Commission should thus follow up the General Assembly resolution adopted in response to the Special Rapporteur's preliminary report (A/49/677) and appoint a special rapporteur on racism in the United States of America.

60. Mr. FRIEDMAN (Coordinating Board of Jewish Organizations) said that the preliminary report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to the General Assembly (A/49/677) represented an important milestone in that it attempted to address the wide range of discrimination and intolerance, including anti-Semitism.

61. Anti-Semitism was the hatred of Jews because of their religious or ethnic origins. It was often accompanied by other forms of hatred directed at minority groups. The growth of anti-Semitism could be seen in the proliferation of hate literature, quasi-academic studies that denied the reality of the Holocaust, the harassment of individuals and vandalism against Jewish institutions.

62. Even in the established Western democracies, parties with links to Nazi or Fascist ideologies maintained a certain level of public support. Throughout Eastern Europe, the restructuring of political and economic realities had led to resurgent nationalisms and the anti-Semitic attitudes, which had become a part of that evolving picture, endangered the very process of democratization. Throughout Europe as a whole, anti-foreign sentiments were associated with anti-Semitism. Both forms of extremism were spreading via such means as computer networks, computer games and publications. Even in Japan, where there were very few Jews, the spread of anti-Semitic literature was being witnessed.

63. His organization was very conscious of the need to fight stereotypes and to identify cases in which the presentation of information served to propagate anti-Semitic images. It was in that spirit that he wished to draw attention to some instances in which the drafting of the report merited closer scrutiny. The last sentence of paragraph 22 could be read as endorsing the view that anti-Semitism was "compounded by the economic power of the Jews". That was itself a stereotype and the formulation of the point could have been clearer. Also, in paragraph 37, the statement that "certain adherents of Judaism continue to treat Christ as an imposter" concerned a theological issue which had no place in the report.

64. The Commission's recognition of anti-Semitism as a specific form of racism and hatred was of historic importance. Many other issues remained to be addressed, however, and his organization hoped that the significant strengths of the Special Rapporteur's reports would be used as a stepping-stone for future advances.

Statements in exercise of the right of reply

65. Ms. SAV (Observer for Turkey) said that a previous speaker had accused her country of racism. All participants should obtain a copy of that statement since it showed precisely what did not constitute racism. It was, in fact, the Greek oppression of the Turkish Cypriots between 1963 and 1974 that constituted a classic example of racism.

66. Mrs. MARKIDES (Observer for Cyprus) said that the observer for Turkey had once again chosen to ignore realities, and had in addition failed to address her as the representative of the Republic of Cyprus. In reply to the allegation that cruelty had been exercised by the Government of Cyprus against the Turkish Cypriots, she wished to refer to a recent article written by a brave Turkish Cypriot in a Turkish Cypriot newspaper, in which he observed that the Turkish Cypriot population had declined by nearly 70,000 since the 1974 invasion. Many Turkish Cypriots, being unable to find food, housing and employment in the land of their birth, had emigrated to foreign countries. The Turkish Cypriot population was shocked by the fact that, when any of its members emigrated, settlers were brought in from Turkey to take their places. If, therefore, the situation improved in the future, the Turkish Cypriots would not be there to benefit. That article expressed her own views very eloquently.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.